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THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

CAN EPISTEMOLOGY BE BASED ON MENTAL STATES?

A long-suffering public is not unjustly shy of polemics upon the theory of knowledge. If the age of Kant had become weary of "dogmatism, which teaches us nothing, and scepticism, which does not even promise us anything," our own time has reason, it must be confessed, to be wary of criticism which does not always seem to settle anything.

On the practical side there is no difficulty. Modern science has found a method which works. Abandoning the search for forms and essences, separating and abstracting precisely those aspects of experience with which it wishes to deal, natural science has analyzed these and resolved them in terms of its chosen unit. The social sciences, with greater or less degrees of clearness, are abstracting their aspects of experience, and seeking the unit in terms of which they may formulate their analyses. But the theory of knowledge still suffers from failure to recognize just what aspect of experience it is to study, what the terms are in which it would state its problem, and what the end is which human knowledge must set before itself as its goal. Two hundred years of epistemology¹ find the doctors still at issue as to its first principles, and employing methods and concep-

¹ Professor Ladd speaks of his *Philosophy of Knowledge* as a 'pioneer work,' but it would be as true to say that since Locke nearly all English writing on theoretical philosophy has dealt with the theory of knowledge, and this is conspicuously true of work since T. H. Green's *Introduction to Hume*.

tions which either explicitly or implicitly make doubtful or impossible the very existence of knowledge itself.

No better illustration of this lack of clearness could be cited than the comparatively recent discussion in the pages of this REVIEW and of *Mind* over the problem of epistemology. The protagonist in the discussion, as was evident from his explanations and replies, was actuated by essentially the same epistemological motive as the other participants, namely, to show the fallacies of subjective idealism and agnosticism. He took as his data, however, the subjective 'ideas' or 'states of consciousness' of the individual with which Locke attempted to start; asserted that the reality to be known was 'existentially outside of consciousness'; stated that the problem is how to bridge this epistemological 'chasm'; and found the root of subjective idealism to be the failure to recognize a 'trans-subjective reference' on the part of the mental states to a reality outside of them. It was, then, comparatively easy for one critic to find that the problem, when thus stated, made knowledge impossible, and agnosticism unavoidable; while another critic found in the implicit contradictions of the problem an evidence that there is no such science as epistemology.

As further illustration, so keen a writer as the author of *Appearance and Reality*, in spite of his brilliant chapter on "Things-in-Themselves," maintains that "our experience where relational is not true." He seems to imply by oft-repeated emphasis that because the 'what' of knowledge and the 'that' of reality are not to be identified, we are thereby deprived of something which we want, and that this deprivation is not merely quantitative, but qualitative, so that knowledge is not merely limited in range, but so 'infected' by the fact that it is thought and not being that, in the words of Dr. Ward, the author seems to be "hounding it on to a happy suicide by taunting it with being false thought so long as it remains thought at all."

If agnosticism can be detected as implicit in the conceptions of its most strenuous critics, it is not surprising that the non-professional mind should be subject to some misgivings as to

the possibility of any certainty in knowledge, or even of any foundations of belief. I think that the general attitude of our age toward its doctors of philosophy and religion is well expressed in the question of an intelligent woman, who knew neither Comte nor Spencer, had perhaps never heard in set terms of the 'relativity of knowledge,' and yet felt the temper of our literature and life: "You talk about 'truth,' and 'good,' and right,' but how do you *know* anything about them? How can you be sure that it is n't all just our point of view? How do you know that the *reality* may not be entirely different?" The central problem of the theory of knowledge could scarcely be more sharply formulated, and the presuppositions with which the problem has usually been approached by the philosopher, and is still approached by the common mind, could scarcely be more clearly expressed. These presuppositions are those underlying a theory which takes ideas or mental states as its starting-point, and really involves a 'copy' theory of knowledge.

A 'copy' theory proceeds as follows. It is assumed that there is one thing called 'reality' and another thing called 'thought,' and that in knowledge the second thing tries to do something to the first thing. Just what this something is may be variously conceived. The mind not 'debauched by metaphysics' considers that thought is to 'copy' or 'be like' reality. A true idea is one that resembles its object. The metaphysician may state in more attenuated language that thought is to 'represent' or 'stand for' or 'refer to' reality. He may resent the charge that he is to be classed with those who naïvely use the first set of expressions, and may even assert that his language implies that thought does not copy; but the fundamental attitude is really the same. Reality is 'there'; the table, one portion of reality, is 'outside my consciousness.' We want to know reality as it 'is,' not as it appears. In every case, reality is more or less consciously assumed to be external. This assumption carries with it as necessary consequences the following positions:—

First, if reality is external, then our criterion of truth must be external also. For, if it be the business of thought to copy

or represent reality, the test of the accuracy of the copy must be found in some imagined comparison of the copy with the original, of the 'idea' with the reality, and thought itself can never make this comparison, can never get 'outside' consciousness to see whether its representation is adequate, or whether the reality to which it 'refers' is really out 'there.' Secondly, an external criterion of this sort makes the very conception of truth and knowledge a contradiction in terms, since it is obvious that no one can ever know that his copy is like, his idea true, his signs adequate representations. In the language of the question cited above, it is certainly impossible to "know that the reality is not entirely different," if by 'reality' we mean something 'outside consciousness,' or outside experience. Nor will it help us to set up the criterion of logical consistency, for if our reality is external to the 'state' which knows it, no consistency within that state will afford any guarantee for the reality without. We may 'reckon with signs,' but we have no external check upon our conclusion. Thirdly, the copy-theory has often, though not always, implied that the more passive the mind is in the reception of this copy, the better the copy. Just as realism in art has often insisted that the artist must copy nature without intruding any of his own interpretation or point of view, so this theory of knowledge, which might fittingly be called 'realism,' maintains that if the mind adds anything to its photograph, anything 'general' or 'relational,' it is spoiling the work and infecting the result with 'universality,' or 'relativity,' or subjectivity, in some form. It is natural, therefore, that any view of knowledge which employs all or any of the foregoing presuppositions as its data, should find its logical outcome in agnosticism, however strenuously its upholders may protest against any such intention, or deny any such doctrine.

It is not necessary for our purpose to recapitulate in detail the history of this 'way of ideas' or copy-theory. Plato's conception of reality as constituting a world by itself which the soul had seen in a previous state of existence, Democritus' theory of the *eidola*, Aristotle's doctrine that the knowing subject takes the 'form' of the object though not its matter, — all

these blended in mediaeval psychology,¹ and gave the concept of 'species' and its modern counterpart 'idea,' which soon assumed a foremost place, and as 'idea' (or in slightly different guise as 'mental state') has not yet ceased to vex psychology and epistemology. Modern writers who begin with the 'existence' of ideas or 'mental states,' and attempt to argue to some other trans-subjective or extra-mental reality, are really struggling with their problem in terms similar to those of Descartes when he argues that the cause of an idea must have as much formal reality as the idea has 'objective' or representative reality. Their task is beset by the same difficulties which Kant experienced, who worked out 'refutation of idealism' after refutation to the number of six, and even then was not clear as to what sort of 'things' he had really proved to exist, and as to 'where' the *Ding ausser mir* really was.

The problem as commonly stated is, in fact, very similar to the puzzle which for a time every psychologist felt bound to solve, namely, the puzzle of erect vision in spite of the inverted image upon the retina. Assuming the reality of this image we have a question admirably adapted to exercise the ingenuity. But the problem ceased to be so baffling when at last it was remembered that there is no image on the retina — except for the physicist or physiologist. The psychologist, in his problem of vision, has nothing to do with this 'fiction' which the other sciences find a convenient construct. The 'idea,' or 'state of consciousness,' is for the epistemologist precisely what the retinal image is for the psychologist, — a fiction with which he has nothing to do. To assume its reality is 'realism' in the scholastic sense.

It may help to make clear the ambiguity involved, if we ask what is meant by the subject, or the individual, or the self, outside of which the reality is supposed to 'exist' or 'stretch away.' It must be (*a*) the self of common life, or (*b*) the self of the psychologist, or (*c*) the mere 'subject' of all cognitive states, or (*d*) the self or individual of metaphysics.

¹ H. Schwarz, in *Die Umwälzung der Wahrnehmungshypothesen*, gives an instructive account of this.

As to (*a*), it is perfectly true that there is something outside this self, because *this self is itself an object in space and time*. It includes my interests and purposes, but it includes also my body or, at the very least, the upper part of my head. Common life, including courts of law and most of the sciences, deals with this objective self, and here it is perfectly true that the table is outside of me, because 'me' has certain spatial limits.

This objective character of the self of common life is simply repeated in other terms in (*b*), the self of the psychologist. For, though we frequently speak of this self as subjective, it is really a bodily self, and so just as objective as the body, — or just as subjective, according to our standpoint. In any case they stand or fall together. The psychologist's self is, as James points out, largely made up of certain bodily 'feels,' and is probably never detached from certain cerebral sensations. This self or subject is just as frankly outward as anything else. If it be objected that the 'feels' or sensations are still surely 'feels' and not things, and therefore are subjective, the reply is they are just as much feeling as the other 'things,' — tables and chairs, — and *not a whit more*. The table for the empirical psychologist is just as 'subjective' as the self, and this was the exact point of view of Berkeley and Hume. It was easy for them to show that things are subjective just because their subject was not a subject at all, but a certain group of their sensations or, as Hume said, "some particular perception of heat or cold, pain or pleasure." The criticism usually passed on these authors that they ignore the trans-subjective reference of ideas, or the extra-mental reality, seems to me to miss the point absolutely. The essence of their position is that their subject is never anything but an object, and from the psychologist's standpoint which they assume, all objects, whether of the more intimate sort called 'self,' or of the less intimate sort called 'things,' are alike external to each other, and alike 'internal and perishing existences.' In brief, it is perfectly consistent to talk about things or reality being extra-mental, or trans-subjective, or outside of consciousness in this sense, because both terms are here on the same level, both are objective, the con-

sciousness just as truly as the things, — perfectly consistent, but hardly worth while except for the empirical psychologist analyzing these objects, or the man of practical life relating them.

Let us turn now to (c), the self as logical subject, the self with which it would seem that the theory of knowledge might properly have to do. Here, it may be said, we get that separation between subject and object which constitutes the epistemological chasm, for here of course subject is just not-object, and object is what is set over against subject. Here, then, it would seem, lies the epistemologist's problem and opportunity, but I venture to assert that there is no intelligible meaning in talking about a trans-subjective reality in this sphere. For what are subject and object in this sphere? Object is simply the counterpart of subject, and subject the correlate of object. More precisely, if we start from the point of view of the preceding sphere, objects are feelings categorized, constituted as things or events, including myself as one of them; the subject is the 'I' which is always identical just because it is the correlate of a unified world of objects. To start, and more properly, from the other end, object and subject are for the theory of knowledge simply the abstractions of the whole of conscious experience. They are poles *within* consciousness, and the object, reality and all, is just as much within as the subject. To ask for a reality which shall be outside consciousness or extra-mental in this sense, is to ask for a something outside of knowledge, a thing-in-itself in the sense of an unknown and unknowable because a contradiction in terms.

This seems to be the place to consider the judgment which is supposed to mark off thought from reality in its very form. But surely it is not a reality outside consciousness which is indicated. When I say "This is a table," the 'this' is just as much in consciousness as the 'table.' What I have before me is a certain content which I proceed to define by my analysis and judgment. But, it is objected, even Kant recognized that the judgment had an objective reference. True, but objective in what sense? "A judgment is nothing but the

mode of bringing given cognitions into the objective unity of apperception." The reference is to something objective in the sense of universal, as opposed to subjective in the sense of peculiar to individual imagination or memory. It is, therefore, to *the whole sphere of reality* as contrasted with a portion of that sphere, not to reality as opposed to thought. Least of all is it to reality outside of consciousness or outside the self. For the self, merely as correlate of the object, is as universal as the object, and is nothing individual at all. It is, in other words, a logical abstraction.

There remains the self of metaphysics, the individual. Is this the self that is referred to in the phrases 'trans-subjective,' 'outside of consciousness,' and 'extra-mental'? There does not seem to be complete consistency on this point. Professor Seth¹ speaks of 'states of the individual,' and says: "The individual stands related to his own experience." From this we might suppose that he did not mean to identify the individual with his 'states' or his experience. But he goes on to explain: "He is that experience or process: these states are his existence." Is it possible that a critic of idealism can mean to identify the *real individual* with a series of states? Could Hume ask anything more? In fact, if we look at the 'he' which is the subject in the sentence, we see at once that it must mean the object studied by the empirical psychologist; and to identify this abstract and mythical 'he' with the individual who is the goal of metaphysics is the height of confusion. The abstractness of such a statement is clearly suggested in the immediately following illustration where the individual, or these particular states of which he consists, is compared to a focus in which the universe burns. Professor Seth adds: "This is our one point of contact with reality, or, to put it otherwise, we exist and know at all just because reality lives in us in this series of experiences, focusses itself in the continuously moving-point of life which constitutes our self-existence." Now here we have two or three possible views of the self. It is a focus, a moving-point. But what is a focus? It

¹ *Mind*, N.S., vol. iii, pp. 17 ff.

is merely a point in which certain rays converge. In itself it is absolutely a construct of the mathematical physicist, and has just as much 'existential' or 'ontological' reality as any other mathematical point, *i.e.*, none at all. To speak, then, of the universe of light or reality of any kind as existentially outside this point would be like saying that they are existentially outside of any other abstraction. If, however, by the 'focus' is meant, not the point considered abstractly, but *the reality or universe as burning in this point*, then I submit that it is impossible to maintain that this reality is a particular individual, 'ontologically distinct' from the universe which burns or the reality which is known. Metaphysically, then, unless we are to hold to an absolute particularism which would make any knowledge not merely mysterious but unthinkable, and solipsism the only position, we cannot speak of reality as extra-mental or outside consciousness.

My conclusion is that there is no proper sense in which we can speak of reality as extra-mental or trans-subjective or outside consciousness. To say that a table is outside of an idea or mental state is to mingle common sense with a psychologist's abstraction; the common man means at least the intelligible statement that the table is outside his head, or such part of it as he conceives his mind to occupy. The epistemologist who uses the expressions cited, is really adopting psychological abstractions as metaphysical reality, and reënforcing his confusion by the purely abstract distinction between subject and object, — a distinction which is in no wise the same as that between self and not-self in psychology, common life, or metaphysics.

But surely, it will be urged, any one in his senses must admit that 'all knowledge takes place in individuals,' that the individual is a particular process of events, a series of states. This may well seem 'so obvious' that one may 'hardly know how to argue it.' "Subjectivism and relativism would not be so persistently put forward and so widely accepted if they did not embody some aspect of the facts." What is to be said, then, in view of these patent facts? Simply that they are

facts in exactly the same sense as the atoms and molecules of the physicist are 'facts,' that the image on the retina is a 'fact.' They are nothing more nor less than the constructions of the psychologist, useful for his purpose perhaps, but no more to be taken as real than the hypothetical and abstract units of any other abstract science. The fact that subjectivism and relativism have been so persistently put forward and so widely accepted, is just as much and just as little a guarantee of the reality of these 'mental states' or 'ideas,' as the prevalence of materialism is a guarantee of the reality of atoms. The two theories rest upon the same fallacy, the acceptance, without criticism, of the abstractions of a special science as the 'facts' of metaphysics. When Tyndall stated that "the passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable," it was soon pointed out that this was due to the abstract terms in which the problem was stated. The passage from the mental states of a particular individual to the knowledge of reality is just as unthinkable, and for the same reason; we are attempting to reconcile implicitly contradictory conceptions. The way out of our difficulty is not by injecting a trans-subjective reference into our hypothetical abstractions called 'states of consciousness,' but by criticising the abstractness of the conceptions employed. The problem of the theory of knowledge will then lie, not in bridging a self-created chasm, but in criticising the categories which give rise to the confusion.

The psychological root of the confusion, so far as it is based on the dualism which is characteristic of knowledge as distinct from mere feeling, seems to lie in the facts so well stated by Mr. Stout:

"The object as we mean or intend it cannot be a modification of our own consciousness at the time we mean or intend it. In the process by which we take cognizance of an object, two constituents are distinguishable: (1) a thought reference to something which, as the thinker means or intends it, is not a present modification of his individual consciousness. It is better to say that it [the object as contrasted with a presentation] is presented *to* consciousness than

that it is presented *in* consciousness. In the perception of a tree the reference to an object is circumscribed and directed by a plexus of visual and other presentations. The object thought of is thereby made determinate. It is a material thing, not a mental occurrence; a tree, and not a stone.”¹

The object is determined to be ‘a material thing, not a mental event,’ in precisely the same way in which it is determined to be ‘a tree, not a stone,’ viz., ‘by a plexus of visual and other presentations.’ A mental event is just as much objective as a tree. The thought reference is not from a mental state to a reality which is not a mental state. It is to a content qualified or categorized as object. “It may be said that the object must always exist as such; *but the existence of the object as such is precisely the same as the existence of the thought of it.*”² The difficulty of the subjective idealist, and just as truly of the epistemologist who attempts to start from the former’s premises, seems to arise from identifying the ‘object’ here referred to with reality, and the present modification of consciousness as such with the subject.

It is now time to ask what should be substituted for this view of thought which regards it as referring to an external reality, and I must beg permission to refer again to Kant, for in Kant we have both the copy-theory and its antithesis.

In the first place, it is not usually recognized that the ‘thing-in-itself’ without which we cannot enter into the Kantian system is by no means the same as that with which we cannot remain in it. The things-in-themselves with which we enter the system are a synonym for reality, are conceived in a positive sense, and when thus used in the plural seem without much doubt to have been conceived as Leibnitzian monads.³ This is quite a different sort of ‘realism’ from that of the ordinary realist. The thing-in-itself which finds no place in the system is the wholly negative *Unding*, to which every attribute is

¹ *Analytic Psychology*, vol. i, pp. 45 ff. I am indebted to Professor Dewey for calling my attention to the passage.

² Stout, *op. cit.*, i, 46. I have supplied the italics.

³ See Riedel, *Die monadologischen Bestimmungen in Kants Lehre vom Ding an sich*; and *Reflexionen Kants*, Herausg. von B. Erdmann, vol. ii, p. 323.

denied. And why denied? Because attributes, categories, are mental. "Space and time are not properties of things in themselves, or determinations which would remain even though all subjective conditions of the perception were abstracted." Of course not. This would be the same as to say that things as they do appear, are just the same as things as they do *not* appear. "Nor have the categories any application except to objects of experience." But surely it is to experience that we want to apply them, so this does not seem so terrible. But, Kant insists, experience is only appearance, only phenomenal. Well, why is it any the worse for that? Because, comes the final rejoinder, appearance is not only not reality, but cannot even tell us of reality. Reality as it does appear, cannot possibly be anything *like* reality as it does *not* appear, and of course (so the theory implies) it is this latter kind of reality that we really want to know. Any elements which we put into the picture, such as forms or categories or relations, ruin the picture and shut us off from any glimpse of true reality.¹

Ruin the picture, but for what? As a copy, doubtless. But suppose we are not looking for a copy of an external reality, but for an interpretation of the reality which is present in experience? This is the other aspect of Kant's thought which struggles with the old copy-theory. For the 'Copernican revolution' really goes much deeper in its implications than the doctrine that we may find a basis for the *a priori* principles of physical science. It really means the transfer of criterion from outer, external reality to be copied, to inner, immanent experience to be rationalized, *i.e.*, interpreted. The only criterion of truth by which we can hypothetically test knowledge is: "Does reality appear to me as it would appear to an intelligence that knew all instead of only a minute part?" And so far as I can see this would mean not less but more relations, not the absence of 'universality,' which is said to be the bane of knowledge, but a universal which is all-comprehensive and perfectly defined.

¹ Volkelt's exposition of the consequences of Kant's separation between thought and reality is admirable; see *I. Kants Erkenntnisstheorie nach ihren Grundprincipien analysiert*.

Further, this Copernican revolution implies, not merely a transfer of criterion, but a change in view as to what is really the excellence, the distinctive end of knowledge. In the copy-theory we noted that this end is to reproduce reality as it 'is,' things as they 'are,' and hence that the more thought contributes the farther we get from reality. But if the very meaning and aim of knowledge is not to represent a reality without, but to interpret an experience within consciousness, then the more categories the better. Through space and time we distinguish experiences; through substance and cause we yet retain identity in difference, unity in change. These are fundamental to the very conception of interpretation, which means putting one part of experience beside another so as to discover the unity amid variety, translating the first into terms of the second, and by implication referring the second back to the first for better definition.

It is in this sense that the judgment is interpretation; interpretation of one part of reality in terms of another. To find fault with knowledge on the ground that the subject is not the predicate, that the 'that' is not the 'what,' is to forget that interpretation implies two aspects of reality, one distinguished from the other in order that it may nevertheless be interpreted in terms of the other.

The question may arise: If knowledge is merely interpretation, how can I be sure that my interpretation is the right one? The only answer in my opinion is: "Does it work?" I think I detect a unity in two apparently isolated experiences; I call one cause, the other effect. Have I given the right interpretation? I confirm my result by verifying my interpretation in other instances. Finally, to eliminate the personal equation or the possibility of error due to my own bias or negligence, I seek further confirmation in the verifications of other observers.¹

¹ This work of confirmation seems to me to be the significance of the demand for verification by others. Professor Royce (*Mind*, July, 1897) maintains that since the category of causation is social in its genesis, it cannot be applicable to any fact which, like a supposed connection in consciousness, is not open to universal observation and verification, for the very conception of causation implies a connection *conceived as* universally verifiable. But if the categories themselves are

In any case the appeal is always to the interpretation given by other intelligence, never to a supposed reality apart from intelligence.

If this be the true standard of reference, Kant was perfectly right in excluding the alternative that the categories might be both subjective and objective, if by 'objective' is meant 'true of things apart from thought.' To admit such an alternative, to speak of laws of thought *and* laws of things, is possible only on the copy-theory. The validity of the categories consists, not in their supposed inherence in things, but in that they are the conceptions in which all intelligence interprets experience. Other validity than this can never be obtained, nor has it any meaning. Truth is immanent in experience. An omniscient intelligence must still be conceived as intelligence if words have any meaning at all, and the universe to such an intelligence would still be an interpreted universe if it were a *known* universe.

We can now see what justification there may be for the statement that knowledge is not reality. Certainly not. It is only an interpretation of reality or, better, reality interpreted. Nor is it even the only interpretation. There is another interpretation of reality in terms of feeling which yields the aesthetic judgment, and another in terms of desire or activity which yields the ethical judgment. In the case of these latter judgments, as in the case of the logical or scientific judgments, it would be easy to show that the interpretation must always be immanent, the criterion within experience. In the terms of our problem, as stated at the outset, truth, beauty, and goodness *are* our points of view; our points of view not as individualistic, particular mental states, but as social intelligence, social appreciation, social will. It is the distinctive prerogative of the spiritual

social, it would seem that the individual of to-day might without violence conceive himself as by this time a fairly social being, and *as observer* consider himself social. From another point of view, indeed, every connection, in physics as truly as in psychology, is absolutely a matter of individual consciousness, and hence unverifiable. To say that because a conception is socially conceived it must be observed by two or more persons, seems to me to make 'social' a purely numerical conception.

that it can attain this threefold interpretation and appreciation of reality ; and the conception of an Absolute, so far as I can pretend to understand it, seems to me not to exclude but rather to embrace this threefold interpretation.

I have spoken of the mediaeval origin of the copy-theory, and of the separation which it implied between thought and reality. There was, however, a deeper reason for the doubt and distrust which gradually emerged in the Middle Ages, and became so definite in Occam. Reality to the mediaeval mind meant God; it meant the divine law, the divine purpose; it meant the other world. This reality was in a very great degree external to thought and experience.¹ It was brought to the Germanic peoples from without. It was not a case of "whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you," but rather of a more majestic deity, system of thought, and ecclesiastical organization, displacing the more homely and familiar if less powerful pantheon. The movement usually called Nominalism, but better styled Individualism, had at least this much of truth and psychological justification: it was the explicit recognition of the externality of that which was then regarded as the preëminently real. One has not to read far in Occam to see that the fundamental problem which lent significance to all his inquiries about genera and species, universal and particular, was, "Can we know God?" and the almost inevitable inference from the *Centilogium Theologicum* is that the God of revealed religion, with all his attributes, is an 'unknowable,' of whom any contradictions may be true. The spiritual reality has become a thing-in-itself.

I can but think that much of the positivism of our own generation has a similar root. Back of all the technical theory of knowledge, deeper than any supposed chasm between subject and object, lies the vague unformulated conviction that the reality which theology teaches, the reality which the church sets in the forefront, the reality which for preceding centuries

¹ For a broader treatment of the implications of this fact, see *The Significance of the Problem of Knowledge*, by John Dewey, University of Chicago Contributions to Philosophy, No. 3.

has animated the moral life and given supreme worth to human existence — is in some sense external. It comes to many as a tradition across the ages rather than as an ever new discovery, vital in the experience of the hour. Many seem to feel that the spiritual, like Plato's world of ideas, must maintain its value by its separateness from the world of actual life, and its detachment from the moving forces of nature and society. Professor Huxley's assertion of the opposition between the cosmic and the ethical process is hailed with great satisfaction, as if the foundations of religious belief were in some way strengthened by a demonstration of the unmoral or even immoral character of the cosmos. Naturalism is again, as in the Renaissance, opposed to religion.

Is this, after all, the surest guarantee of the reality of the moral and spiritual? May it not be that the best mode of dealing with agnosticism and positivism is found in discovering and interpreting the moral and spiritual value of the nature which is so real to the scientist, of the history and society which are so real to the sociologist, of the daily life which is the ever-present reality to the common man? Nature *as studied* by the scientist, society *as viewed* by the economist, daily life *as considered* by the common man, may have little or none of this value, either from the intentional abstractness of the standpoint, as in the two former cases, or from negligence or blindness, as often in the latter. But it is the business of philosophy to restore the concreteness, the vitality, the values, the full reality, excluded by the abstractness of scientific method; it is the task of religion to quicken the appreciation for that which is none the less real because its reality is experienced within consciousness, and not located outside of it.

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